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# FORWARD FOOD

## PLANT-BASED TOOLKIT FOR RESTAURANTS

PREPARED BY  
HUMANE SOCIETY  
INTERNATIONAL/CANADA



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INTERNATIONAL**  
CANADA



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2020

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## INTRODUCTION

# Bringing Food Forward



Thank you for downloading this Forward Food Toolkit. In case you are not already familiar with our work, Forward Food is a non-profit program of Humane Society International/Canada aimed at creating a more sustainable future for the foodservice industry. We work to put more plants at the centre of the plate, where they belong, benefitting animals, the planet and our health, as well as usually reducing food costs.

This toolkit is one of several free-of-charge resources that we offer to foodservice professionals. We hope it is helpful, and encourage you to reach out if you have any questions or comments. Otherwise, we wish you the best of luck in transitioning your menus to be more plant-forward. It will have a big impact on the health of your guests, the environment and the animals we share it with.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Riana Topan'.

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# Defining Plant-Based

## Plant-Based

A food item consisting entirely of foods derived from plants, including vegetables, grains, nuts, seeds, legumes and fruits, and with no animal products (meat, dairy, honey, eggs, fish, etc.) This also includes other animal-derived ingredients, such as dyes and pigments, as well as any ingredients that are tested on animals.

## Plant-Forward

A food item that puts plants at the centre of the plate, without completely eliminating animal derived products (meat, dairy, honey, eggs, fish, etc.). An example of this would be meatloaf that is 60% mushrooms. These dishes can align well with Canada's Food Guide, which recommends that 7/8 of our plates are filled with plants (1).



Credit: Sylvia Elzafon/The HSUS

# Why Plant-Based?

## Consumer Demand

Consumers are looking for more plant-based options! In fact, over 40% of Canadian consumers are actively trying to incorporate more plant-based foods into their diets (2).

## Consumer Health

The new Canada Food Guide encourages increased consumption of plants because diets rich in vegetables, fruits, whole grains, legumes and nuts are consistently linked to lower obesity rates, blood cholesterol levels, and blood pressure, which reduces the risk of heart disease, certain cancers, type 2 diabetes, and more (5). In fact, 75% of millennials are eating less meat for health reasons (6).

## Market Trends

Over half of Canadians want to reduce their meat intake (3). People under the age of 35 are three times more likely to be vegetarian or vegan than people 49 or older (4).

## Sustainability

Animal agriculture is one of the top contributors to global environmental problems, due to its vast use of water, land, and fossil fuels and high carbon dioxide and methane emissions (7). Plant-based foods have a much lower impact on the planet (8). Replacing traditional breakfast items with plant-based alternatives can reduce GHG emissions by 60% (9). Changing lunch and dinner menus to be plant-based can reduce emissions by 85% (10).

# How to Implement Plant-Based Initiatives

## Set a Goal

What percentage of your menu will be plant-based? **In 2020, we are urging institutions and businesses to sign onto the Forward Food pledge, to transition 20% of their current (animal-based) menu offerings to plant-based.\*** This achievable yet impactful goal demonstrates a strong commitment to better, more sustainable food, and helps you tell a story.

This can be measured by the proportion or number of dishes you offer that are 100% plant-based, or by the volume of ingredients you purchase that are plant-based (since plant-forward dishes, made mostly from plants, could count towards this goal). Once you have decided on your goal, it's time to get working on making this a reality!

*\*Note: this means 20% of current offerings are to become plant-based, not just for 20% of options to be plant-based.*



Credit: Julia Kuziw/Chartwells

## Join institutions across Canada in taking the Forward Food pledge

Email program Coordinator, Lucy Cullen at [lcullen@hsi.org](mailto:lcullen@hsi.org) or visit our [webpage](#) for more details and to learn how Forward Food can promote your plant-based commitment.

## Plant-Powered Menu Planning

Create delicious entrées with these menu planning tips. Here are a few ideas to help with menu planning in order to achieve your new plant-powered goal:

- **Get Inspired:**

- Schedule sampling sessions with vendors of plant-based foods and ingredients. Please see our Vendor List (on our website) for a list of plant-based products.
- Get inspiration from the Forward Food recipe kit. See below for some examples.
- Ask your customers! They are your greatest resource. Consider doing a poll on social media or simply asking them in person what they would like to see on your menu.

# Plant-Powered Menu Planning

Continued

- **Brainstorm Menu and Marketing Ideas with Your Culinary Team:**

- Put more plants on the plate by identifying options on your menu where you can increase the percentage of plants and decrease the percentage of animal derived ingredients. For example, instead of offering a half-chicken, offer a quarter-chicken with a quinoa salad and roasted vegetables on the side.
- A great way to get your guests to try more plant-based foods is to serve familiar dishes they already know and like. Spins on traditional comfort foods are guaranteed to get customers excited: try creamy mac 'n' cheese, savoury poutine with mushroom gravy, or a lentil walnut 'meatloaf' with garlic mashed potatoes.
- Many existing recipes can be modified by substituting plant-based ingredients for animal ones. Replace meat with plant-based meats and dairy milk with plant-based milks at a 1:1 ratio. Replace 1 egg with 1 tbsp ground flax or chia seeds with 3 tbsp warm water, ¼ cup unsweetened applesauce or mashed banana, or ¼ cup blended silken tofu. Experiment with different plant-based proteins, from artisanal plant-based meats to low-cost beans, legumes and soy products.

- **Crave-Worthy Names:** Use positive descriptive words to highlight a meal's best attributes or what makes the dish special. Researchers at Cornell University worked with a school that found by simply renaming "Bean Burrito" as "Big Bad Bean Burrito," they increased burrito consumption by more than 40% (11)!

- **Change Up Choices:** Remove the least popular meat options currently offered and replace them with new, exciting plant-based ones. If you aren't sure what your guests like most, introduce a few new offerings each month until you have a list of tried-and-true best sellers. Aim to always have at least two fully plant-based options in each menu category, from appetizers to sides, from mains to desserts.



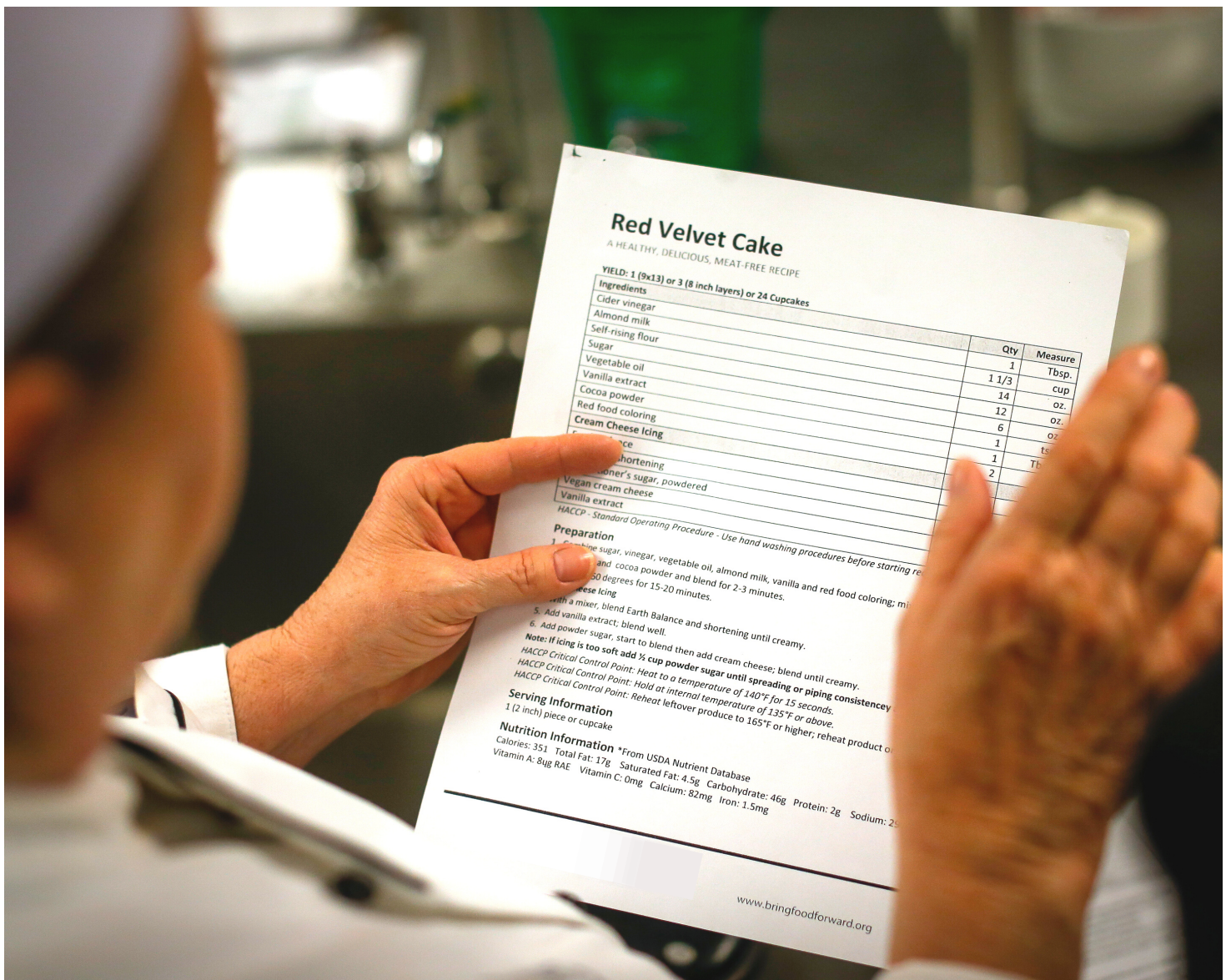
Credit: Julia Kuziw/Chartwells

- **Offer Plant-Based Proteins:** According to Technomic, half of consumers aged 18-34 want the ability to switch animal proteins for plant-based proteins (12). Make this possible by adding tempeh, tofu, lentils, peas, beans, nuts and seeds to your menu.
- **Highlight Health:** Use your menu to draw attention to the fresh, healthy ingredients in your new nutrient-dense dishes, encouraging customers to make the smarter choice. Denote lower-impact and healthier options with a special symbol and/or develop one or two nutrition bullet points on each recipe. For example, you could say of a "Mighty Marinara with Chickpeas" dish: "Did you know that their high fibre, potassium, vitamin C and vitamin B-6 content, coupled with the absence of cholesterol, make chickpeas a heart-healthy food?"

# Plant-Powered Menu Planning

Continued

- **Front & Centre:** Feature your new plant-powered options at the forefront of your menu. Fast-casual restaurant A&W placed their new plant-based protein sandwich at the centre of their digital menu, and it increased same-store sales by 10%! A&W used Beyond Meat for their plant-based for their protein option. There are many great plant-based protein options available. Please see our vendor list for more information.
  - Note: Best practice is to not completely separate your plant-based food section from the rest of your menu. Consumers will be more likely to try something new if it is mixed in with the usual offerings and sounds like it will be satisfying. You can still use small symbols to identify plant-based options for those who specifically want them.
- **Calculate Cost-Savings:** Plant-based meals usually cost significantly less to produce than their meaty counterparts. Vegetarian entrees can be up to 50% less expensive than those with meat, adding up to thousands of dollars in savings per year (13). Offset rising meat prices by offering heart-healthy, protein-rich options like three-bean chili and black bean burritos. Take a few minutes to calculate the difference between your new veg-focused dishes and existing meat-based ones and let the numbers speak for themselves.



# Recipe Suggestions

## Crabbyless Crabcakes

A HEALTHY, DELICIOUS, PLANT-BASED RECIPE

### INGREDIENTS

#### Crab Cakes

- Hearts of Palm (canned, drained) - 2 x 14 ounce cans
- Canola Oil (divided) - 1 cup
- Onions (small diced) - 1 cup
- Red Bell Peppers (small diced) - 1 cup
- Fresh Garlic (minced) - 1 teaspoon
- Nori Flakes (toasted) - 2 teaspoons
- Egg-Free Mayonnaise - 1/2 cup
- Nutritional Yeast - 1/4 cup
- Breadcrumbs - 2 cups
- Panko Breadcrumbs - 2 cups
- Salt - 1 teaspoon
- Black Pepper - 1 teaspoon
- Old Bay Seasoning - 2 tablespoons
- Vegan Worcestershire Sauce - 2 tablespoons
- Tabasco Sauce - 1/2 teaspoon

#### Remoulade Sauce

- Egg-Free Mayonnaise - 1/2 cup
- Ketchup - 1 tablespoon
- Dijon Mustard - 1 tablespoon
- Tabasco Sauce - 1 teaspoon
- Vegan Worcestershire Sauce - 1 teaspoon
- Fresh Lemon Juice - 1 tablespoon
- Sea Salt - 1/4 teaspoon
- Shallots (minced) - 2 teaspoons
- Capers (minced) - 2 teaspoons
- Fresh parsley (chopped) - 1 teaspoon
- Red Bell Pepper (minced) - 2 teaspoons



Credit: Chat Photography

### PREPARATION

#### Crab Cakes

1. Pulse drained hearts of palm in a food processor until the consistency resembles crab meat.
2. Heat two tablespoons of the canola oil in a fry pan. Sauté onions, bell peppers, and garlic for 2-3 minutes and then remove from heat.
3. In a bowl, combine the onion mixture with the nori flakes, hearts of palm, two tablespoons of canola oil, egg-free mayonnaise, nutritional yeast, breadcrumbs, salt, pepper, old bay seasoning, Worcestershire sauce, and tabasco sauce.
4. Mix well and scoop mixture out into 3 ounce balls on a plate or sheet pan.
5. Press into patties.
6. Coat each patty in the panko breadcrumbs.
7. Heat remaining oil in a fry pan. Pan fry each patty until golden brown.

#### Remoulade Sauce

1. Combine all ingredients listed under the remoulade sauce in a blender. Blend on high for one minute. Refrigerate for up to one week.



# Mushroom Tacos with Cilantro Cream Sauce

A HEALTHY, DELICIOUS, PLANT-BASED RECIPE

## INGREDIENTS

### Tacos

- Portobello Mushroom Caps (large) - 4 cups
- Tamari Sauce (gluten-free soy sauce) - 2 tablespoons
- Olive Oil - 1 tablespoon
- Green Bell Pepper (diced) - 1 cup
- Red Onion (small diced) - 1/2 cup
- Corn (fresh, canned or frozen) - 1/4 cup
- Corn Tortilla Shells (4 inch) - 24 each
- Fresh Cilantro (coarsely chopped) - 1/2 bunch
- Pico de Gallo - 1 cup

### Cilantro Cream

- Raw Cashews - 1 cup
- Water (divided) - 2 1/2 cups
- Cilantro (stems and leaves) - 1/2 bunch
- Salt - 1 tablespoon



Credit: Julia Kuziw/Chartwells

## PREPARATION

### Tacos

1. Clean and dice the mushroom caps and place in a zip lock bag or shallow pan. Add the tamari to the mushrooms and let marinate for at least 1 hour.
2. Add oil to a saucepan and heat over medium heat. When the oil is hot add the mushrooms with tamari sauce. Cook and stir often for about 5 minutes.
3. Add diced bell peppers, finely chopped onion and corn and cook for 5 more minutes; remove the pan from heat.
4. On a large skillet over a high flame, heat the tortillas approx. 20 seconds per side
5. Assemble tacos with 2 tablespoons of mushroom mixture, then top with cilantro sauce and Pico de Gallo.

### Cilantro Cream

1. Place cashews in a container and cover with 1 1/2 cups of water (make sure all cashews are covered with water).
2. Cover and refrigerate for at least four hours in refrigerator.
3. Remove from refrigerator. Drain and reserve liquid. Add cashews, 1 cup of reserved liquid, cilantro and salt to a blender. Blend until smooth.
4. Refrigerate until ready to use.

# Red Velvet Cake

A HEALTHY, DELICIOUS, PLANT-BASED RECIPE

## INGREDIENTS

### Cake

- Apple Cider Vinegar - 1 tablespoon
- Non-Dairy Milk - 1 1/3 cup
- Sugar (granulated) - 12 ounces
- Vegetable Oil - 6 ounces
- Vanilla Extract - 1 teaspoon
- Vegan Red Food Colouring - 2 ounces
- Self-Rising Flour - 14 ounces
- Natural Cocoa Powder - 1 tablespoon

### Cream Cheese Icing

- Non-Dairy Margarine - 4 ounces
- Vegetable Shortening - 1/2 cup
- Vanilla Extract - 1 teaspoon
- Sugar (powdered) - 1 pound
- Non-Dairy Cream Cheese - 4 ounces



Credit: Julia Kuziw/Chartwells

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## PREPARATION

### Cake

1. In a large mixing bowl, combine vinegar, non-dairy milk, sugar, vegetable oil, vanilla extract and red food coloring and mix using a mixer.
2. Add flour and cocoa powder to the mixing bowl and mix for 2-3 minutes.
3. Spoon into prepared cake or cupcake pan and bake at 350 degrees Fahrenheit for 15-20 minutes or until a toothpick inserted in the center comes out clean. Allow to cool on a wire rack.

### Cream Cheese Icing

1. Using a mixer, blend margarine and shortening until creamy.
2. Add vanilla extract; blend well.
3. Add powder sugar and start to blend, then add cream cheese; blend until creamy.
  - a. Note: If icing is too soft add 1/2 cup powder sugar until spreading or piping consistency is achieved.

# Marketing Tips

There are endless options for promoting your plant-powered initiatives. Here are a few ideas to get you started:

1. Display posters in your dining room to raise awareness about the benefits of plant-based (see example below).

2. Put up point-of-sale signs promoting the new feature plant-based options.

3. Hold a special faculty meeting, or include it as a topic at a regularly scheduled meeting.

4. Host a kickoff event. Check out the kickoff ideas below.

5. Offer discounts or deal to incentivize customers to try your new plant-based fare. Or, use a punch-card to reward loyal patrons with a free meat-free meal after 10 plant-based purchases.

6. Use your institution's social media networks (e.g., Twitter, Facebook and Instagram) to post weekly or regular reminders about your plant-forward initiative.



7. Send a news release to the local news media using the template on the following page.

# Media Release Template

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Your logo here

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**HED in 14pt font BOLD, all lower case except for first letter and proper names**

*SubHED in 12pt font BOLD italic, all lower case except for first letter and proper names*

CITY (Today's date) - This is your lead; it should be clear, concise, max two sentences and requires a decisive call to action, e.g. Forward Food Canada is calling on all universities to offer plant-based options on campus.

Your second paragraph offers more detail, expanding upon why you've made this call to action, e.g. more students than ever are saying no to animal products and so it's in everyone's best interests to meet the demands of this shifting demographic.

By this point you're moving into a quote. "Plant-forward food is key to a sustainable future in food service" said Forward Food Canada coordinator Lucy Cullen. "It is better for the animals, our environment and our health."

Your quote can be followed by a partner quote, like someone from the university you're working with or another animal organization if this is a joint effort.

This paragraph can be dedicated to hard facts, like stats on water consumption, deforestation, health, and how animal agriculture is not exactly helping our climate. Try to link to sources where and when possible.

More info if you're presenting a particularly complex issue.

Do you have media or downloads that go with this PR? That line goes here along with your hyperlinks / download links.

To arrange an interview, please call or email the media contact below.

-30-

Media contact: Name, Title, Organization - office: number, cell: number, email

Description of your restaurant/business

# Social Media Ideas

- **Tweets:**

- Mondays just got better! It's #PlantForward Tuesday. Check out our colourful Asian noodle stir fry, a delicious way to get your veggies.
- Why #PlantForward? For your health, animals and the environment.
- It's that time of week! #PlantForward Tuesday. What will you eat?
- Have you tried our new #PlantForward offerings? Share your food pics and tag #PlantForward.
- Who else is doing #PlantForward? Watch this short video and find out!

- **Facebook/Instagram:**

- What's #PlantForward? (post image, below left)
- Have you tried #PlantForward? What's your favorite plant-based meal?
- We love #PlantForward because of the food. What's your reason? (post image, below middle)
- Who else is going plant-powered? Watch this fun video to find out!
- It's #PlantForward Tuesday. What will you have for lunch today? (post image, below right)



- **Events:**

- Holding a launch event is a great way to get customers excited about your plant-based initiative. Here are some ideas:
  - Organize a launch event to showcase all your new plant-powered menu options. Invite customers, local plant-based food influencers and the media.
  - Offer food samples to acquaint customers with your new plant-powered foods.
  - Host a social media contest, featuring customers' best pictures of your new plant-powered offerings.
  - Hold a poster-making contest and announce the winner at the kickoff. The posters can address the three pillars on which your plant-based initiative focuses: health, sustainability and animal welfare.



# Additional Resources

- **Books**

- **How Not to Die:** <https://nutritionfacts.org/book>
  - A book for individuals looking to learn more about the health benefits of a whole food, plant-based diet, especially as it relates to illness and disease

- **Websites**

- **Forward Food Culinary Collaborative:** <https://www.facebook.com/groups/999015310186774/>
  - A forum where culinary professionals can get new ideas, exchange recipes and share best practices about plant-based menus
- **Forks Over Knives:** <https://www.forksoverknives.com>
  - A website for individuals looking for more information about the many benefits, especially for health, of eating a whole food, plant-based diet
- **Green Planet:** <https://www.onegreenplanet.org/about-us>
  - A platform for eco-conscious news around the world
- **Happy Cow:** <https://www.happycow.net>
  - A platform for individuals to find plant-based or veg-friendly restaurants all over the world
- **LiveKindly:** <https://www.livekindly.co>
  - A news source to stay up-to-date on vegan news around the world
- **VegNews:** <https://vegnews.com>
  - A news source to stay up-to-date on all things plant-based

- **Organizations**

- **Forward Food (US website):** <https://forwardfood.org>
  - A non-profit organization for food service companies, restaurants, higher education and health-care institutions to learn how to build a sustainable future by putting more plants on the plate
- **Menus of Change:** <http://www.menusofchange.org>
  - An initiative from The Culinary Institute of America and Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health aimed at creating more sustainable menus
- **Nourish Health:** <https://www.nourishhealthcare.ca>
  - An organization that aims to create a sustainable future for health-care institutions
- **Plant-Based Foods of Canada:** <https://www.plantbasedfoodscanada.ca>
  - A collective voice for the producers of plant-based products in Canada
- **Sustainable Restaurant Association:** <https://thesra.org>
  - A UK based organization focused on sustainability in restaurants
- **Toronto Vegetarian Association:** <https://veg.ca>
  - A Toronto resource for everything related to vegetarian food
- **World Resources Institute:** <https://www.wri.org>
  - A global organization aimed at creating a sustainable future
  - Check out their [Cool Food Pledge](#) program (partnered with other notable organizations) to learn about how they are putting more plants on menus around the world

Please visit our webpage for more Forward Food resources and information:  
<http://friendsofhsi.ca/issues/forward-food/>

**Sources:****1. Canada's Food Guide**

Government of Canada (2019)  
<https://food-guide.canada.ca/en/>

**2. Plant-Based Protein Market: Global and Canadian Market Analysis**

The National Research Council, Agri-food Innovation Council (2019)  
[https://nrc.canada.ca/sites/default/files/2019-10/Plant\\_protein\\_industry\\_market\\_analysis\\_summary.pdf](https://nrc.canada.ca/sites/default/files/2019-10/Plant_protein_industry_market_analysis_summary.pdf)

**3. Plant-Based Dieting and Meat Attachment: Protein Wars and the Changing Canadian Consumer**

Dr. Sylvain Charlebois, Dr. Simon Somogyi, Janet Music  
Dalhousie University (2018)  
<https://cdn.dal.ca/content/dam/dalhousie/pdf/management/News/News%20%26%20Events/Charlebois%20Somogyi%20Music%20EN%20Plant-Based%20Study.pdf>

**4. Plant-Based Dieting and Meat Attachment: Protein Wars and the Changing Canadian Consumer**

Dr. Sylvain Charlebois, Dr. Simon Somogyi, Janet Music  
Dalhousie University (2018)  
<https://cdn.dal.ca/content/dam/dalhousie/pdf/management/News/News%20%26%20Events/Charlebois%20Somogyi%20Music%20EN%20Plant-Based%20Study.pdf>

**5. What are Canada's Dietary Guidelines**

Government of Canada (2019)  
<https://food-guide.canada.ca/en/guidelines/what-are-canadas-dietary-guidelines/>

**6. Why are so many people going vegan?**

Jessica Cotton (2019)  
<https://www.milliondollarvegan.com/vegan-trending-millennials/>

**7. The Facts**

Cowspiracy  
<https://www.cowspiracy.com/facts>

**8. The Facts**

Cowspiracy  
<https://www.cowspiracy.com/facts>

**9. Catering to the Climate: How Earth-Friendly Menus at Events Help Save the Planet**

Center for Biological Diversity (2019)  
Isaac Emery Ph.D., Principal, Informed Sustainability Consulting LLC & Jennifer Molidor Ph.D. Center for Biological Diversity

**10. Catering to the Climate: How Earth-Friendly Menus at Events Help Save the Planet**

Center for Biological Diversity (2019)  
Isaac Emery Ph.D., Principal, Informed Sustainability Consulting LLC & Jennifer Molidor Ph.D. Center for Biological Diversity

**11. The Sneaky Way To Get Kids To Eat Healthy School Lunches**

Alexandra Svokos (2014)  
[https://www.huffingtonpost.ca/entry/healthy-school-lunches\\_n\\_5991324](https://www.huffingtonpost.ca/entry/healthy-school-lunches_n_5991324)

**12. Veggies Move to Center Stage at Breakfast**

Patricia Cobe (2017)  
<https://www.foodservicedirector.com/menu/veggies-move-center-stage-breakfast#page=0>

**13. Financial Benefits: Save Money While Meeting Customer Demand for More Meatless Options**

St. Joseph Health System, Sonoma County, California (2018)

## Disclaimer

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